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UNCLAS THE HAGUE 001882

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: NL KSCA SENV OTRA TPHY
SUBJECT: EPA/OIA FIDLER

REF: SECSTATE 213711

¶1. (U) Country Clearance is granted for Dave Goodwin, Anhar Karimjee, Stephen Andersen, and Sally Rand for travel to The Netherlands August 9 - August 14, 2003.

¶2. (U) Embassy understands that no assistance is requested.

SECURITY ADVISORY:

¶3. (U) Post provides the following threat assessment for The Netherlands: The Department of State on April 21, 2003 issued a worldwide caution to alert Americans of the need to remain vigilant. The Department of State reminds Americans that tensions remaining from the recent events in Iraq may increase the potential threat to U.S. citizens and interests abroad, including by terrorist groups. Terrorist actions may include, but are not limited to: suicide operations, bombings or kidnappings. Possible threats include conventional weapons such as explosive devices or non-conventional weapons, including chemical or biological agents. Terrorists do not distinguish between official and civilian targets. These may include facilities where American citizens and other foreigners congregate or visit, such as residential areas, clubs restaurants, places of worship, schools, hotels, outdoor recreation events or resorts and beaches. If facilities cannot be avoided, U.S. citizens should increase their security awareness at such locations. Please consult the Department's web site for text: <http://travel.state.gov>. In light of this caution all visitors to The Netherlands are encouraged to assess their security posture and be alert to their surroundings for possible surveillance. All visitors should exercise caution while traveling abroad, as U.S. citizens and facilities are often the target of groups demonstrating opposition to U.S. foreign policy.

¶4. (U) A major concern for visitors is crime. Most crimes against official Americans are limited to pick-pocketing and luggage theft. However, burglary, vandalism to automobiles, and theft from hotel rooms are not unknown. Recently, theft of laptop computers has increased, especially at Schiphol airport and major train stations. The thieves operate in small groups, are determined and well practiced at distraction theft. Several official travelers have been victimized lately, losing personal and unclassified government computers, valuable software and data. Regulations require the use of the diplomatic pouch for shipment of classified equipment and information.

¶5. (U) Streets can be walked in relative safety, but as in any U.S. urban city, the same amount of caution should be exercised after dark in the more populated cities of The Hague, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam. Red-light districts and public transportation hubs are common locations for incidents of street crime.

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